NNPC targets 12bcf/d gas production by 2030, seeks pipeline funding

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) has unveiled plans to increase Nigeria's natural gas production from the current 7.5 billion standard cubic feet per day (bcf/d) to 10 bcf/d by 2027 and 12 bcf/d by 2030.

The company, however, says achieving the ambitious targets will depend on innovative pipeline financing, strategic partnerships, reliable infrastructure and enhanced indigenous technical capacity.

Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Ltd., Mr. Bashir Ojulari, disclosed this on Tuesday in Abuja while delivering the keynote address at the Nigeria International Pipeline Technology and Security Conference (NIPITECS) 2026.

Ojulari, who was represented by the Managing Director of NNPC Gas Infrastructure Company (NGIC), Mr. Audu Ibrahim, said Nigeria had the resources and policy framework to drive a major expansion of its gas industry.

He said the country's estimated 215 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, supported by the Petroleum Industry Act, the Decade of Gas Framework and the Gas Master Plan, provided a solid foundation for achieving the production targets.

According to him, NNPC has signed gas sales and purchase agreements covering 1.29bscfd for long-term supply and 750 million standard cubic feet per day for domestic industrial consumption.

The agreements, he said, represent more than $20 billion

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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State police: NASS transmits constitutional amendment to Tinubu for assent

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

Nigeria has moved a major step closer to establishing state police following the Senate's approval of the transmission of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2026, to President Bola Tinubu for assent.

The decision, reached on Wednesday, followed the endorsement of the proposed constitutional amendment by all 36 State Houses of Assembly, completing the legislative requirements for the establishment of State Police Services.

The Senate adopted a motion sponsored by its Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, directing the Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, to transmit the bill to the President in accordance with the Acts Authentication Act, 2004.

Leading the motion, Bamidele informed the Senate that the bill had fulfilled the constitutional requirements stipulated under Sections 9(1) and 9(2) of the 1999 Constitution for an amendment of this nature.

He recalled that the Senate passed the bill on June 24, 2026, while the House of Representatives approved it on July 23, before it was transmitted to the 36 state legislatures for endorsement.

According to him, all 36 State Houses of Assembly had communicated their resolutions to the National Assembly, exceeding the constitutional requirement of approval by at least two-thirds of the state legislatures.

The states include Abia, Adamawa, Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara.

Bamidele described the unanimous endorsement by the state legislatures as a significant milestone in Nigeria's constitutional reform process and evidence of broad legislative support for decentralised policing.

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Okpebholo pledges end to over-taxation at New Benin Market

AGHEDO IYOBOR

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has assured traders at New Benin Market, Benin City, that his administration will resolve complaints of excessive taxation, pledging to reach an agreement with market leaders and the Edo State Board of Internal Revenue.

The governor gave the assurance on Wednesday during a rally organised by the All Progressives Congress (APC) at the market, where traders and market leaders raised concerns over taxation, electricity supply and other challenges affecting their businesses.

Okpebholo recalled his campaign visit to the market, during which he promised to return if elected governor and address some of the challenges confronting traders, including the poor condition of access roads.

He said his administration remained committed to improving the living conditions of residents and creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

On the electricity challenge, the governor promised to direct the Edo State Electrification Agency (EDSEA) to investigate the cause of the unstable power supply and take appropriate steps to address it.

"If it is a transformer, we will get you a brand new transformer. What we are after is to provide you with a good life. Your vote was for me to provide you with a good life," he said.

On the issue of taxation, the Chairman of the Mother Union in the market, Mr Taiwo Aideyan, appealed to the governor to reduce the levies imposed on traders.

Responding, Okpebholo announced that he would meet with the market leader-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



RALLY:
Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo addressing New Benin Market traders during a rally of the All Progressives Congress APC in Benin City.

INEC warns against unofficial results ahead 2027 polls —Pg 2

Pension assets surge to N31.8trn in 8 months as 350,000 new contributors join —Pg 4

Palestinian woman, 72, shot dead by Israeli settlers in West Bank, health ministry says —Pg 8

FIFA Rankings: Super Eagles Climb To 29th Globally, Fifth In Africa —11

NEWS

State police: Senate...

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Contributing to the debate, Senate Minority Leader, Senator Abba Moro, described the motion as straightforward, noting that all constitutional requirements had been met.

He urged the Senate to approve the immediate transmission of the bill, arguing that the country's worsening security challenges required additional policing structures to complement existing security agencies.

Similarly, Senator Muhammad Adamole supported the initiative, identifying terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and cultism among the security threats that could benefit from a more decentralised policing arrangement.

However, former Edo State Governor and Senator representing Edo North, Adams Oshiomhole, cautioned that the establishment of state police must be accompanied by strong legal safeguards to prevent possible abuse by state governments.

Oshiomhole acknowledged concerns that governors might deploy state police for political purposes but argued that such fears should be addressed through appropriate legislation rather than used to frustrate the reform.

He called for a separate law clearly defining the powers, responsibilities and operational boundaries of federal and state police formations.

Also supporting the amendment, Senator Ekong Samson, representing Akwa Ibom South, stressed the importance of an independent judiciary in checking possible excesses and ensuring that state policing operates within the confines of the law.

Following the contributions, Senate President Godswill Akpabio subjected the two prayers in the motion to a voice vote, and both were unanimously adopted.

The first prayer authorised the Clerk to the National Assembly to transmit the constitutional amendment to President Tinubu for assent, while the second commended the President for supporting the initiative and urged him to forward the proposed National Policing Bill to the National Assembly for consideration and passage.

Akpabio explained that constitutional approval alone would not be sufficient to operationalise state police, stressing the need for a comprehensive legal framework to regulate the relationship between federal and state police formations.

The proposed National Policing Bill is expected to address operational standards, certification, inspection, information sharing, complaints, accountability, jurisdictional boundaries and transitional arrangements.

He said the legislation would also establish clear procedures for resolving disagreements between the different policing authorities.

Akpabio expressed optimism that the introduction of state police would significantly improve security across the country, predicting that the arrangement could reduce insecurity in the states by at least 70 per cent.

He, however, assured that the National Assembly would initiate the necessary legislation if the Executive failed to forward the proposed bill within a reasonable period.

The Senate President also noted that participating states would be required to enact their respective enabling laws and meet prescribed national standards before establishing their police services.

Okpebholo pledges end to...

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ship and the Chairman of the Edo State Board of Internal Revenue at his office on Thursday to agree on an acceptable tax arrangement.

"We are going to resolve the issue of tax by Thursday in my office with your leaders and the state chairman of the Board of Internal Revenue, so that your leaders can tell us what you can pay.

"We are going to put it to rest. The tax issue will die completely, so that you can do your business very well," the governor assured.

He also assured members of the Igbo community in Edo State of fair representation in his administration, while appealing for their support for President Bola Tinubu and other APC candidates in the forthcoming general election.

Earlier, Aideyan commended the governor for ending illegal ticketing in the market and improving security across the state.

Another market leader, Mr John Ogbu, praised the governor's development initiatives, describing the projects undertaken within his two years in office as commendable.

Ogbu particularly acknowledged the appointment of an Igbo indigene into the state cabinet, noting that Comrade Martins Oli Anayor was the first Igbo man to occupy such a position in the state's history.

"This is the only governor in the history of the state who has appointed an Igbo man into his cabinet in the person of Comrade Martins Oli Anayor," he said.

INEC warns against unofficial results ahead 2027 polls

...Commission says only authorised officials can

By Aghedo Iyobor

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has warned political parties, election observers, media organisations and other stakeholders against presenting independently collated election figures as official results ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The Commission said independent election results tabulation, while permissible, must complement rather than replace its statutory process of collation and declaration of results.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, gave the warning on Tuesday in Abuja at a stakeholder roundtable organised by Yiaga Africa to develop a Code of Conduct for Independent Election Results Tabulation.

Amupitan, who was represented by the Commission's Director of Information and Communication Technology, Dr. Lawrence Bayode, said the proposed voluntary code would strengthen electoral transparency, promote responsible information management and boost public confidence in the electoral process.

He maintained that independent verification must not create competing centres of authority or be presented as an alternative to the legally recognised collation process.

"Independent tabulation must not be presented as a substitute for the statutory collation process, nor should unofficial projections or privately aggregated figures be communicated as officially declared election results," he said.

The INEC chairman stressed that transparency should be accompanied by responsibility, adding that credible independent scrutiny would provide an additional layer of accountability in the conduct of elections.

Amupitan expressed concern over the growing threat of election disinformation, including fabricated result sheets, manipulated electoral data, misleading projections and the misuse of artificial intelligence to circulate false information.

He warned that inaccurate or incomplete independently collated figures could generate confusion, heighten political tension and undermine public confidence in the electoral process, particularly with the speed at which information spreads through digital platforms.

He reiterated that the Constitution and the Electoral Act 2026 vest the responsibility for official collation and declaration of election results in duly authorised electoral officials.



2026 WORLD GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) DAY:
From left: representative of the Lead City University, Dr Adesola Adediran; Chairman, Geo-information Society of Nigeria (GEOSON), Oyo State, Mr David Afolayan; Chairman, Information Management Teams, University of Ibadan (UI), Prof Victor Oladokun; representative the Dominican University, Dr Omokehinde Deji- Akinpelu; and Deputy Director, Information Management Teams, UI, Mr Taiwo Ajisafe, during the 2026 World Geographic Information System (GIS) Day organised by GEOSON in collaboration with the UI in Ibadan on Wednesday.

NNPC targets 12bcf/d gas...

CONTINUED FROM PG 1

in associated investments.

He stressed that translating Nigeria's vast gas reserves into economic prosperity would require sustained investment in transportation infrastructure.

"Achieving the production target would require innovative financing models, strategic partnerships, reliable pipeline infrastructure and stronger indigenous technical capacity," he said.

Ojulari identified the Obiafu-Obrikom-Oben (OB3), Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) and West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP) projects as critical infrastructure investments in Nigeria's gas development strategy.

On the 105-kilometre OB3 pipeline, he said the 48-inch facility was designed to transport up to two billion cubic feet of gas daily from Rivers State to Edo State.

He explained that the project involved overcoming significant engineering challenges, particularly the River Niger crossing, to establish a vital connection between the eastern and western gas networks.

On the 640-kilometre AKK pipeline, Ojulari disclosed that the $2.8 billion project, designed to transport 2.2bscfd of gas, had attained approximately 95 per cent completion. Gas delivery to Abuja, he said, was expected before the end of 2026.

He noted that the project demonstrated the potential of innovative infrastructure financing, having secured $1.5 billion through a financing arrangement backed by projected dividends.

The third project, the 681-kilometre West African Gas Pipeline, transports Nigerian gas to Benin Republic, Togo and Ghana, reinforcing Nigeria's position as a major regional gas supplier.

Ojulari also disclosed that intergovernmental agreements establishing the legal framework for the Atlantic coastal gas project were signed in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in July.

In another development, the NNPC chief announced that Nigeria had achieved 100 per cent availability of its major pipelines for the first time in two decades.

He said pipeline availability had remained between 95 and 100 per cent over the preceding 18 months, attributing the improvement to an integrated security framework coordinated by the Office of the National Security Adviser.

The framework, he explained, combines improved surveillance, security coordination and stronger engagement with host communities.

According to him, the improved security situation has contributed to increased crude oil production, which recently rose to 1.71 million barrels per day, representing the country's highest output level in five years.

Ojulari maintained that dependable pipeline infrastructure remained essential to unlocking the country's vast gas resources and translating them into electricity generation, industrial expansion, employment opportunities and sustainable economic growth.

He called on investors, financial institutions, development partners and pipeline technology professionals to collaborate with NNPC in developing innovative financing models capable of accelerating critical gas infrastructure projects.

He said Nigeria's gas ambitions could only be fully realised through sustained investment, technological innovation and effective partnerships.

With its enormous gas reserves and expanding pipeline network, Nigeria is positioning natural gas as a major driver of its energy transition and long-term economic transformation.

AfDB approves $102m Sterling Bank facility to boost SMEs, farmers, create 6,000 jobs

By Aghedo Iyobor

ABUJA

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a $102 million financing package for Sterling Bank Nigeria Limited to expand access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), women and youth-led businesses, and vulnerable farming communities across Nigeria.

The facility is expected to support at least 200 businesses, create up to 6,000 jobs and provide financial assistance to more than 5,000 smallholder farmers affected by insecurity, displacement and climate-related challenges.

The approval was disclosed in a statement issued by the AfDB on Tuesday in Abuja.

The $102 million package comprises a $50 million line of credit, a $20 million sustainable loan, a $2 million concessional loan and a $30 million trade finance transaction guarantee.

According to the development finance institution, the $50 million line of credit will provide competitively priced, long-term financing to businesses operating in priority sectors, including healthcare, education, agriculture, renewable energy and transportation.

At least 30 per cent of the facility will be allocated to eligible women-owned, women-led and youth-owned enterprises.

The $20 million sustainable loan is designed to support businesses pursuing environmentally friendly and socially beneficial investments, while the $30 million trade finance guarantee is expected to facilitate up to $150 million in trade transactions.

The bank said the financing package was structured to address the diverse funding challenges confronting Nigerian businesses while promoting inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

A significant component of the intervention is the $2 million concessional loan under the Agri-Food SME Catalytic Financing Mechanism (ACFM).

The facility will support vulnerable agricultural communities through Sterling Bank's Affordable Microlending Programme (STAMP), implemented in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The programme is expected to reach more than 5,000 smallholder farmers and agricultural SMEs, helping them rebuild their livelihoods, improve productivity and strengthen resilience against economic and environmental shocks.



AWARD:
(Left)...The Chairman of the Senate Press Corps, Mr. Taiye Odewale presents the Best Impactiful Representation Award to the Chairman South East Development Commission: Senator Orji Uzor Kalu while Hon.Peter Eze (2nd left) and Mr. Emeka Nwala looks on at the National Assembly Abuja yesterday. Photo by Omoye Aminu.

Court clears way for AAP to begin enforcement of party registration judgment

Igiebor Confidence

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has granted the African Alliance Party (AAP) permission to commence enforcement proceedings in respect of a Court of Appeal judgment directing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to register the party.

Justice Salim Ibrahim granted the application on Tuesday after ruling that the motion ex-parte filed by Peters Olusegun on behalf of the AAP was meritorious.

The Court of Appeal, Makurdi Division, had on June 11, 2026, ordered INEC to register the party following an appeal against an earlier judgment of the Federal High Court in Lafia, which dismissed the party's case.

In his ruling, Justice Ibrahim held that the applicant had complied with the relevant legal provisions for the enforcement of the judgment and provided sufficient materials to support the application.

Consequently, the judge granted the party leave to commence enforcement proceedings before the Federal High Court in respect of the appellate court's judgment.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Olusegun filed the application as the judgment creditor on behalf of the party in suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/2548/2026.

The application, dated October 20, listed INEC, its Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, and its Secretary, Dr Rose Oriarian-Anthony, as the first, second and third judgment debtors.

The applicant sought the court's permission to begin enforcement proceedings, alleging that INEC had failed to comply with the Court of Appeal's judgment despite being formally notified.

In an affidavit supporting the application, Sylvia Nkemakosi, a member of the applicant's legal team, explained that the original suit was heard by Justice Anyalewa Onoja-Alapa of the Federal High Court in Lafia.

She stated that the court dismissed the case on April 14, prompting the applicant to approach the Court of Appeal, which subsequently delivered judgment in favour of the party on June 11.

According to the affidavit, the applicant wrote to INEC on June 15, notifying the commission of the judgment and attaching a copy of the enrolled court order.

However, Olusegun alleged that INEC failed to comply with the judgment and instead filed notices of appeal at the Supreme Court on July 8 and July 24.

He further stated that the commission subsequently filed a motion for stay of execution at the Court of Appeal but later withdrew the application on August 13.

The applicant said another letter demanding compliance with the judgment was sent to INEC on the same day, but the commission allegedly failed to respond.

Olusegun also told the court that INEC later filed an application for a stay of execution at the Supreme Court under suit number SC/ML/296/2026.

He alleged that the application was not filed in accordance with the Supreme Court's 2026 Practice Direction on the mandatory electronic submission of court processes and was consequently not considered by the court.

RMAFC seeks national framework to strengthen revenue generation, diversification

Igiebor Confidence

ZUMA

The Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) has called for the development of a national policy framework to strengthen revenue generation and guide the three tiers of government in expanding their revenue sources.

The Chairman of the commission, Dr Mohammed Shehu, made the call on Tuesday at a two-day retreat organised to prepare for the proposed National Revenue Summit in Zuma, Niger State.

Shehu said the summit would provide an opportunity to develop strategies for strengthening Nigeria's revenue mobilisation and diversification efforts.

He stressed the need for a clear roadmap and practical recommendations to expand the country's revenue base ahead of the proposed summit.

The retreat brought together members of the commission and management staff to deliberate on the summit's objectives, scope, themes, stakeholder participation and expected outcomes.

Shehu described the retreat as an important preparatory step towards ensuring the successful hosting of the summit.

According to him, the proposed national summit will bring together stakeholders from the three tiers of government, revenue-generating agencies, the private sector, academia and development partners.

He said the gathering would provide a platform for discussions on revenue mobilisation, generation, diversification and the sustainability of Nigeria's revenue system.

Shehu noted that the initiative aligned with President Bola Tinubu's vision of revamping the economy, increasing non-oil revenue and strengthening fiscal sustainability.

He urged participants to develop a coordinated roadmap with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and expected outcomes.

The chairman emphasised that the summit must go beyond being a mere gathering and produce meaningful dialogue and practical recommendations capable of improving the nation's revenue system.

FG calls for private capital to build resilient food system

Aghedo Iyobor

NASARAWA

The Federal Government has called for stronger collaboration among governments, farmers, private investors and research institutions to build a resilient agrifood system that can guarantee food security and shared prosperity.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Abubakar Kyari, made the call on Tuesday at the opening of the 2026 National Agricultural Show in Nasarawa.

The annual event is organised by the National Agricultural Foundation of Nigeria (NAFN), in collaboration with the ministry and the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN).

The 2026 show has as theme: "Building a Resilient Nigerian Agrifood System: Empowering Farmers, Mobilising Investment and Driving Innovation for Food Security and Shared Prosperity."

Kyari, represented by the Director, Federal Department of Agriculture, Mr. Bukar Musa, said building a resilient agrifood system required coordinated efforts and adequate support for farmers.

"Success would be measured by increased productivity, improved farmers' incomes, reduced post-harvest losses, job creation and affordable food."

He identified access to quality inputs, machinery, irrigation, extension services, finance, storage and markets as essential to improving smallholder farmers' productivity.

The minister said government funding alone could not meet the investment needs of the agricultural sector, calling for increased participation by financial institutions, agribusinesses, cooperatives and development partners.

First Bank unveils 24-hour digital centre In Festac, targets 30 nationwide

Kebonkwu Ruth

LAGOS

First Bank of Nigeria Ltd., says it plans to expand its Digital Xperience Centres, DXCs, to more than 30 locations nationwide, as it unveiled a new facility in Lagos.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of FirstBank Group, Mr Olusegun Alebiosu, disclosed this on Tuesday at the launch of the bank's Digital Xperience Centre in Festac, Lagos.

Alebiosu said the bank currently has 11 centres across the country.

He added that the bank was working toward expanding the network to more than 30 locations to bring automated banking services closer to customers.

He said the Festac facility was established to serve the area's large population and provide residents with access to banking services round the clock.

He identified population density, commercial activities and improved security as major considerations in selecting Festac for the facility.

NEWS

Pension assets surge to N31.8trn in 8 months as 350,000 new contributors join

AGHEDO IYOBOR

LAGOS

Nigeria's pension industry recorded a 15.8 per cent growth in assets in eight months, with total assets under management rising to N31.8 trillion as of August 2026.

The Pension Fund Operators Association of Nigeria (PenOp) disclosed this during its 2026 Annual Media Retreat held virtually on Tuesday.

Chief Executive Officer of PenOp, Mrs. Anthonia Ifeanyi-Okoro, said pension assets rose by N4.34 trillion from N27.46 trillion in December 2025 to N31.8 trillion in August 2026.

"Pension assets under management had climbed to N31.8 trillion as of August 2026, reflecting the industry's strongest growth momentum in recent years and reinforcing its expanding role in Nigeria's financial system," she added.

She attributed the growth to strong equity market performance, investment returns and increase in the number of contributors.

Ifeanyi-Okoro said about 350,000 new contributors joined the scheme between December 2025 and August 2026.

According to her, "the industry also recorded growth in its membership base, with approximately 11.3 million RSA holders, as efforts to deepen pension participation and strengthen retirement savings continued."

She noted that the equities market recorded a bullish performance during the first two quarters of 2026, contributing positively to pension fund returns.

Quoted equities rose by 49 per cent by June, while domestic and foreign equities accounted for 20.76 per cent of total pension portfolios as of August.

Ifeanyi-Okoro said investments in Federal Government securities declined from about 65 per cent of total pension assets at the end of 2025 to 55.9 per cent as of August 2026.

The shift reflects operators' increased exposure to other investment opportunities, including equities and real-sector projects.

PenOp said the growth underscores the pension industry's expanding role as a major pool of long-term domestic capital and a stabilising force in Nigeria's financial system.

The association reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, good governance and protection of contributors' funds, while urging more workers, especially in the informal sector, to join the Contributory Pension Scheme.

Dangote to build 20 fertiliser plants across Africa, create 90,000 jobs

AGHEDO IYOBOR

LAGOS

President and Chief Executive of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has unveiled plans to establish 20 fertiliser blending plants in strategic locations across Africa, as part of a major expansion to grow the fertiliser market and create jobs.

The expansion is expected to employ about 90,000 people across the group's refinery, petrochemical and fertiliser operations in Lagos by next year.

Dangote disclosed the plans in an interview, saying job creation remains a major motivation behind the group's expansion.

According to him, "the refinery expansion is huge. By next year, we expect to have almost 90,000 people working on the refinery and fertiliser projects in Lagos.

"My biggest concern is job creation in Africa. We have a very youthful population, and we are not creating enough jobs. We must push harder to create opportunities and keep our young people productively engaged."

Beyond refining, Dangote said the group is expanding its fertiliser production capacity and developing infrastructure to ensure farmers across Africa have reliable access to agricultural inputs throughout the year.

"We also plan to establish 20 blending plants in strategic locations across Africa. We intend to begin mining potash and phosphate in Congo-Brazzaville very soon," he assured.

He disclosed that the group is targeting nine million tonnes of urea production capacity, alongside 1.2 million tonnes of diammonium phosphate (DAP) and one million tonnes of NPK blending capacity in Lagos.

The objective, he said, is to ensure farmers can buy fertiliser when they need it.

He added: "What we want is for the countries where we operate, and their neighbours, to have fertiliser available 365 days a year. Farmers should be able to buy it when they need it, without worrying about supply."

Dangote linked the programme to his determination that Africa should build capacity to meet its own agricultural input requirements, rather than remain vulnerable to disruptions in international markets.

He recalled how the Russia-Ukraine crisis exposed Africa's dependence on external fertiliser supplies.

"Within four years, Africa should never again have to go anywhere to beg for fertiliser."

He expressed confidence that sufficient access to natural gas would enable a much larger expansion, saying "If Africa needs 30 million tonnes and we can secure enough gas, we can produce and supply it."

The projects form part of an investment programme estimated at $65 billion over four years, spanning refining, fertiliser, petrochemicals, power, pipelines and other businesses.

About $50 billion would go into existing businesses, while $15 billion would go into new ventures.

The refinery expansion is expected to add another 700,000 barrels per day, bringing planned total capacity to approximately 1.4 million barrels per day.

The wider programme also covers plans to develop 10,000 megawatts of electricity generation capacity in partnership with some African countries and increase cement production capacity to 100 million tonnes.



SEMINAR:
From left: Public Relations Manager, The Polytechnic Ibadan, Alhaji Soladoye Adewole; Registrar, the Polytechnic, Dr Taiwo Olajide and Guest speaker, Mrs Olayinka Balogun; during the Registry Seminar for Registrars in Higher Institutions organised by the Polytechnic Ibadan on Wednesday

Senate warns rising political intolerance threatens 2027 elections

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

The Senate has raised alarm over the rising wave of political intolerance, violence and attacks on political leaders and supporters across the country, warning that it could undermine democracy and threaten the credibility of the 2027 general elections.

The alarm followed a motion sponsored by Senator Abdul Ningi (Bauchi Central) titled, "Urgent Need to Check the Rising Incidence of Political Violence, Political Intolerance and Attacks on Political Leaders and Supporters in Nigeria."

Leading the debate, Ningi expressed concern over what he described as an alarming pattern of intimidation and violence.

He cited the reported attack on President Bola Tinubu's motorcade on Friday, November 13, 2026, shortly after he observed Jumu'ah prayers at the Shehu Shagari Central Mosque in Garki, Abuja.

According to the motion, the departing convoy was reportedly attacked with stones and other dangerous objects, resulting in damage to vehicles and injuries to security operatives.

Ningi also cited the reported attack on the convoy of former Vice President and African Democratic Congress (ADC) presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, in Sokoto State.

He further referenced attacks on former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi and other political stakeholders during gatherings in Benue and Edo states.

He also recalled the violent disruption of a political procession involving supporters of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) and the Obidient Movement in Asaba, Delta State, on November 7, which reportedly left one person dead and five others injured.

"These incidents reflect a disturbing pattern of political intolerance, intimidation and violence capable of undermining public confidence in the electoral process and discouraging citizens from exercising their democratic rights," he warned.

Seconding the motion, Senator Ali Ndume (Borno South) described the attack on the President's motorcade as an embarrassment to the country, not just to the President.

Minority Leader, Senator Abba Moro, condemned both physical violence and abusive attacks on opponents, including those carried out on social media, warning that normalisation of such conduct could weaken democratic institutions.

Senator Babagida Husaini (Jigawa North-West) regretted the failure of successive governments to implement recommendations of the 2008 Justice Mohammed Uwais Electoral Reform Committee on electoral violence.

Senate President Godswill Akpabio urged INEC to apply the law without discrimination.

"Any candidate or supporter caught instigating violence, then INEC has a right to disqualify. No matter the political party, such a candidate should immediately be disqualified," he advised

Akpabio drew attention to Sections 121 to 128 of the Electoral Act 2026, which provide for offences relating to electoral violence, intimidation and snatching of BVAS machines, ballot boxes and other electoral materials.

Oyedele calls for affordable mortgage systems to tackle Nigeria's housing deficit

IGIEBOR CONFIDENCE

ABUJA

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Prof. Taiwo Oyedele, has called for sustainable housing finance mechanisms to improve access to affordable homeownership in Nigeria.

Oyedele made the call on Tuesday in Abuja at the ninth Affordable Housing Finance and Investment Summit and Expo (AHFIS 9.0), themed, "Housing is Finance: From Financing to Homeownership."

The minister, who was represented by his Special Assistant on Physical Risk Management and Sustainability, Dr Greg Ezeilo, said the challenge of affordable housing in Nigeria went beyond the construction of houses.

He stressed the need for improved financing arrangements, stronger institutional coordination and affordable mortgage products to make homeownership accessible to more Nigerians.

According to him, the challenge of affordable housing in the country is largely linked to financing structures, institutional coordination and the affordability of living conditions.

He identified high construction costs, limited access to long-term financing, expensive mortgage products and difficulties in perfecting land titles as major barriers to homeownership.

Oyedele also highlighted the widening gap between household incomes and housing prices, describing it as a challenge requiring urgent attention.

NEWS

37 miners' deaths: Senate demands sanctions against NSCDC officers

ABUJA

The Senate on Wednesday called on the Federal Government to prosecute or appropriately punish officers found culpable in the deaths of 37 young artisans who died in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Minna, Niger State.

It also urged the government to pay compensation to the bereaved families and implement the recommendations of the independent investigative committee set up to probe the incident.

The resolutions followed a motion sponsored by Senator Mohammed Musa (Niger East), who raised concerns over the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the artisans on September 17, 2026, after their arrest during an operation against suspected illegal mining activities.

Presenting the motion, Musa described the incident as a serious human rights concern, saying it raised questions about the treatment of detainees and accountability within security agencies.

He said, "The incident should not be treated as an ordinary tragedy but as a serious matter requiring transparency, accountability and institutional reforms to prevent a recurrence."

The senator told the chamber that the Federal Government had constituted a 10-member independent investigative committee to establish the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

He said the committee had completed its assignment and submitted a report which reportedly identified serious lapses and recommended sanctions, institutional reforms and compensation for the victims' families.

Musa urged the Senate to intervene by demanding the immediate implementation of the recommendations, particularly those concerning officers found culpable and reforms within the NSCDC.

The deaths sparked public outrage, mourning and protests in Niger State, prompting calls for an independent investigation into the treatment of the young men while in detention.

The Senate, during Wednesday's plenary, observed a minute of silence in honour of the deceased and commended President Bola Tinubu, the Federal Government and Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago, for facilitating the establishment of the investigative committee.

It also resolved to constitute a delegation led by the Senate President to pay a condolence visit to the families of the deceased in Niger State.

The chamber directed its committees on Interior, Human Rights, Police Affairs and Judiciary to monitor the implementation of the investigative committee's recommendations and report back.

2027: INEC plans mock election in 638 Rivers polling units

ABUJA

Port Harcourt: The Independent National Electoral Commission said it will conduct a mock accreditation and election results upload exercise in 638 polling units across Rivers State on November 28.

INEC said the move is part of preparatios for the general elections in 2027.

INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner in Rivers State, Dr Johnson Sinikiem, disclosed this during the State-Level Stakeholders' Meeting on the 2027 General Elections at the commission's headquarters in Port Harcourt on Wednesday.

Sinikiem said two polling units would be selected in each of the state's 319 registration areas, also known as wards, for the exercise.

He said the exercise will test the performance of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System and network connectivity under real election conditions.

The INEC REC explained that the exercise was designed to identify possible technical challenges and assess the efficiency of the technology ahead of the general elections.

Sinikiem called on security agencies, political parties and the electorate to support the exercise to ensure its smooth conduct, saying adequate information would be provided to the public on the selected polling units and other arrangements for the exercise.

He said INEC was intensifying preparations for the 2027 elections, noting that Rivers State had approximately 3,736,434 registered voters spread across 23 local government areas, 319 registration areas and 6,866 polling units.

He disclosed that the commission currently had 6,399 fully functional and configured BVAS devices in its inventory.

He added that additional units would be deployed from the national headquarters to cover all polling units and provide operational backups.

The REC also announced that the commission had received 173,241 Permanent Voter Cards in different batches ahead of the elections.

Sinikiem further said 99,381 PVCs, comprising previously uncollected and newly printed cards, had been collected by voters as of Tuesday, November 17, urging those whose cards were ready to visit INEC offices in their respective local government areas.

He stated, "I strongly urge citizens who cards are available to visit our 23 LGA offices to claim them. Nationwide mock accreditation and results upload in Rivers State.

"INEC will be conducting a nationwide mock accreditation and result upload exercise on the 28th November 2026 to test the bimodal voter accreditation system, BVAS, ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"This exercise will span across all the 23 local government areas and 319 registration areas which is the wards across Rivers State."

He noted that the commission had also taken delivery of essential non-sensitive election materials, including voting cubicles, mats, ballot boxes and other operational accessories, which had been audited and distributed to the 23 local government areas for safe storage.

He urged security agencies to strengthen surveillance around INEC offices to protect the materials against theft or damage.

On personnel mobilisation, Sinikiem said recruitment of ad hoc staff for the elections, which opened on September 18, would close at midnight on Wednesday, November 18.

He identified members of the National Youth Service Corps as critical partners in the electoral process, adding that the commission had sustained engagements with corps members to prepare them for their election duties.



ANNIVERSARY:
From left: Director of Production, Frame Bruleecom, Mr Asen Gusv; representative of Evolution Film (EF), Ms Sandrina Kappitz; Consultant and Production Manager, EF, Mr Obehi Iziiduh; Executive Producer, Banger Studios, Ms Dolly Nwaduba, Secretary to the Enugu State Government, Prof. Chidebere Onyia; Chairman, Nigerian Coal Miners Association, Chief Hyacinth Ohagwu; Executive Secretary, Enugu Council of Arts and Culture, Mr Laurence Ani and Official, Banger Studios, Mr Julian Nnadi, during the opening ceremony of the 77th Anniversary of Coal Miners Massacred on 18th of November 1949 in Enugu on Wednesday

Bayelsa'll deliver Tinubu, Diri declares as Tompolo donates campaign vehicles

Philip Jeremiah Eke

YENAGOA

Governor Douye Diri has declared that the Bayelsa State will deliver its votes to President Bola Tinubu in the January 16, 2027 presidential election, citing his administration's commitment to true federalism and development in the Niger Delta.

He gave the assurance in Yenagoa during the inauguration of the Bayelsa State chapter of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement, where former Niger Delta militant leader, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, donated campaign vehicles and other mobilisation materials to support the President's re-election bid.

The governor said the All Progressives Congress (APC) was preparing an extensive grassroots campaign across Bayelsa's three senatorial districts to mobilise voters for Tinubu, expressing confidence that the state would demonstrate its support during the presidential campaign scheduled for December 15, 2026.

"We assure you that Bayelsa is APC. APC is Bayelsa. This is just testing the microphone. By the time we go around sensitising our people across the three senatorial districts, and the main day of the campaign, the presidential campaign in Bayelsa State, is on the 15th of December, 2026. By God's grace, Bayelsa will showcase their support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu."

Diri commended Tompolo for spearheading the mobilisation initiative, describing him as a distinguished son of Ijawland whose involvement reflected the determination of the Ijaw people to advance their political and developmental interests

Describing Bayelsa as the Jerusalem of the Ijaw nation, the governor said the people's long-standing demand for true federalism was beginning to receive attention under Tinubu's administration.

"As the Ijaw people, we are very proud of our son, Government Ekpemupolo. Let us keep up this spirit. The spirit of the Ijaw man that will never die. The spirit of the Ijaw man that must get to where we are going.

"Federalism is key, and we have been talking about true federalism. President Tinubu has started showing signs of leading us towards true federalism. That is what we want as a people," he declared.

Speaking through the Managing Director of Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited, Kestin Pondi, Tompolo urged Bayelsa residents to support Tinubu's re-election, arguing that another four years would enable the President to consolidate his administration's reforms and accelerate development across the country.

He said support for Tinubu would also demonstrate appreciation for what he described as the good governance and development projects undertaken by the Diri administration in Bayelsa.

According to him, increased federal allocations to state governments under the present administration had strengthened their capacity to pay workers' salaries and pensions while providing additional resources for infrastructure and other development projects.

Renaissance Energy faces one-week deadline over EA/EJA content plan

Lamai Cassius

YENAGOA

Host communities in the EA/EJA oil field have given Renaissance Energy a one-week ultimatum to release the expired Community Content Plan, warning of mass action if the company fails to hand over the document to the duly inaugurated Community Content Committee.

The ultimatum was issued on Tuesday after a fourth round of talks between leaders of the four host kingdoms — Iduwini, Mein, Bassan West and Kou — Renaissance Energy and the Joint Task Force (JTF), which is mediating the dispute.

Over 90 community representatives attended the meeting, scheduled for 10:30 a.m. but which did not commence until after 2 p.m. Community leaders accused Renaissance Energy of arriving unprepared, without the document and without approval from its management, despite a prior directive to present it and carry out sensitisation across the host communities.

Speaking on behalf of His Royal Highness Roman Dereabebe, Paramount Ruler of Letugbene Federated Community, Chief Raphael Lamaletei, Palace Permanent Secretary, said the plan expired over a year ago and must be renewed and jointly signed by the communities and Renaissance Energy to ensure even distribution of benefits among the four kingdoms.

Lamaletei alleged that a group of persons, working in collaboration with some unscrupulous staff of Renaissance Energy, was hijacking contracts meant for community benefit under the plan.

"We have been insisting that this Community Content Plan, which has expired for over a year, should be renewed so that we can look at it, signed by the communities and Renaissance Energy, so that the benefits can be shared evenly among the four kingdoms," Lamaletei said.

He said the communities had obtained the consent of their traditional rulers — the Royal Majesties of Iduwini, the Regents of Mein and Bassan West, and the Royal Highness of the EJA communities — before attending the meeting.

"Today, it was so aggressive. What was agreed upon is the resolution to meet at the next meeting. Renaissance Energy came unprepared, presenting nothing whatsoever, not even taking go-ahead from their management," he said.

NEWS

Fake drugs: Reps summon NAFDAC, seek tougher penalties

ABUJA

The House of Representatives has resolved to invite the heads of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Department of State Services and Nigeria Police Force to brief its relevant committees on measures being taken to tackle the growing circulation of fake drugs and adulterated drinks across the country.

The resolution followed the adoption of a motion of urgent public importance moved on Wednesday by the member representing Obi/Oju Federal Constituency of Benue State, Mr David Agada.

This followed reports that the consumption of a suspected poisonous herbal medicine had claimed four lives in the constituency.

The motion, titled, "Urgent need to investigate the alleged distribution and administration of suspected poisonous, unregistered/substandard herbal medicinal products in Obi/Oju Federal Constituency, Benue State to prevent further loss of lives," called for urgent intervention to establish the circumstances surrounding the incident and prevent further casualties.

Moving the motion, Agada reminded lawmakers of their responsibility to protect the lives and welfare of their constituents.

He noted that the NAFDAC Act empowers the agency to regulate and control the manufacture, distribution, sale and use of drugs, herbal medicinal products and other regulated health-related products in Nigeria.

He also cited the Food and Drugs Act and the Counterfeit and Fake Drugs and Unwholesome Processed Foods (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, which prohibit the manufacture, distribution and sale of unsafe, adulterated, counterfeit or unwholesome drugs and related products.

Speaking on the incident, Agada said, "The House is concerned that on October 31 2026, three individuals identified as Muhammad Sani Adamu, Musa Alhaji Kala who claim to come from Sokoto State and Alhaji Muhammad Sule from Bauchi States allegedly introduced and distributed a herbal medicinal product in Oju/Obi Federal Constituency, Benue State, claiming that the product could cure typhoid fever, waist pain and other ailments.

"We are concerned that several residents reportedly purchased and consumed the said product, after which a number of them developed severe symptoms within hours and were rushed to different hospitals for emergency medical attention.

"The House is disturbed that the incident has reportedly resulted in the deaths of four persons, namely-Awugo Joseph Oyije, who died on 2nd November, 2026; James Ogah Onma, who died on 4th November, 2026, following referral for further medical treatment; Ode Friday Ogah died on November 5, 2026; and Mr Agi Edugbeke who died on the 11th day of November, 2026."



LAGOS EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT 4.0:
From left: Founder, Tengen Family Office, Mr. Aigboje Aig-Imoukhede; Founder, Bimwunmi Nigeria Ltd., Mrs Aisha Mustafa; Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; Founder, Myfoodangels, Olapeju Uman; Chairman, Board of Trustees, Lagos State Employment Trust Fund, Mrs. Peju Adebajo; Founder, Wakamedics, Victoria Duru and Lagos State Commissioner for Wealth Creation and Employment, Mr. Akinyemi Ajigbotafe, during the Lagos Employment Summit 4.0 in Lagos on Wednesday.

Unemployment, stigma may push ex-offenders back to crime – NCoS CG

ABUJA

The Nigerian Correctional Service has called on governments, private organisations, religious institutions and communities to support the reintegration of ex-offenders into society, warning that unemployment, economic hardship and stigmatisation could undermine their rehabilitation and push them back into crime.

The Controller-General of Corrections, Sylvester Nwakuche, made the appeal during the presentation of 2026 aftercare vocational starter packs to discharged inmates in Abuja.

He said sustained support was necessary to help them establish businesses and become productive members of society.

Nwakuche said the service had provided starter packs to nearly 33 ex-offenders to enable them to put the vocational skills acquired during incarceration into practice.

According to him, the aftercare programme is designed to bridge the gap between rehabilitation in correctional facilities and successful reintegration into society.

"For many inmates, the journey back into society is often confronted by stigma, unemployment, economic hardship, and rejection. Without adequate support, these challenges may undermine the gains of rehabilitation and increase the risk of reoffending," he said.

The Controller-General explained that the starter packs covered seven vocational areas, including laundry, barbing, tailoring and fashion design, hairdressing, carpentry, masonry, and welding and metal fabrication.

He said the trades were selected to provide the beneficiaries with opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship and economic independence.

"These starter packs represent much more than tools of trade. They are instruments of empowerment, they are symbols of renewed confidence, and seeds of economic independence.

"They represent our belief that today's offenders can become tomorrow's entrepreneurs, employers of labour, and responsible contributors to national development," he added.

State police: Barau praises Tinubu as Senate sends bill for assent

ABUJA

Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin, has commended President Bola Tinubu for his commitment to the establishment of state police, describing the Senate's approval of the constitutional amendment bill as a historic achievement.

Barau spoke on Wednesday during plenary while supporting a motion by the Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele, seeking the transmission of the State Police Bill to Tinubu for assent following its approval by the required number of state Houses of Assembly.

The Deputy Senate President, who chairs the Senate Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution, said the development marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's efforts to decentralise its policing system and strengthen the country's security architecture.

He said successive administrations had discussed the establishment of state police and explored various options but encountered setbacks until the emergence of the Tinubu administration.

Barau said, "We must, therefore, acknowledge and commend the unwavering commitment of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, to ensuring the passage of this bill and the integration of State Police into our country's policing architecture."

He described the development as a major achievement for the current administration and the 10th National Assembly, adding that members of the legislature had collectively contributed to making history.

"I wish to express my profound appreciation to every member of the committee on the review of the Constitution under my chairmanship, other members of the Senate and, indeed, all members of the National Assembly for their invaluable contributions to the legislative process that has brought us to this historic moment in our collective pursuit of the establishment of State Police in Nigeria.

ICPC opposes bail for fake PFIPC DG

ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission has urged a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory to reject the bail application of a suspected fraudster, Adeniyi Adeyemi.

The commission argued that his continued detention is necessary for his personal safety.

The commission said some individuals who allegedly lost money to Adeyemi were searching for him and could physically harm him if released.

Prosecution counsel, Sylvanus Tahir, SAN, made the submission on Wednesday while opposing the bail applications filed by Adeyemi and four civil servants charged alongside him over an alleged N27bn fraud involving a purported Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council.

"My lord, there are many petitions against him, and the people who lodged those petitions are after him," Tahir told the court.

He cited the case of a petitioner from Ibadan who allegedly lost money to the defendant and had been searching for him.

"We believe that it will be in his own best interest to remain in custody for safekeeping," the prosecution counsel said.

The ICPC also described Adeyemi as a flight risk, alleging that he had access to substantial funds and could interfere with some of the proposed witnesses.

However, Adeyemi, through his counsel, Ibrahim Angulu, dismissed the prosecution's argument, insisting that he lacked the financial capacity to flee or influence witnesses because his bank accounts, including those belonging to his wives, had been frozen.

"My lord, the accounts of the defendant were frozen, including those of his wives. They have all been frozen. So he does not have the means to escape or to influence the witnesses," Angulu said.

Adeyemi and the four other defendants, Aminu Abdullahi, Ogaba Harry, Florence Omameh and Patricia Akhigbe, had pleaded not guilty to a 36-count amended charge bordering on obtaining money by false pretence, forgery and corruption.

PUBLIC NOTICE

AUGUSTINE COMMUNITY CARE INITIATIVE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO STRANDED, VULNERABLE AND DISTRESSED NIGERIANS ABROAD, INCLUDING PERSONS SEEKING VOLUNTARY RETURN TO NIGERIA, THROUGH NECESSARY SUPPORT AND REINTEGRATION SERVICES.
2. TO PROVIDE RELIEF AND WELFARE SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE PERSONS AND FAMILIES, INCLUDING CHILDREN, WOMEN, THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.
3. TO UNDERTAKE OTHER LAWFUL CHARITABLE AND HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES INCIDENTAL OR CONDUCIVE TO ACHIEVING THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES, CONSISTENT WITH THE NON-PROFIT NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION.

TRUSTEES

AUGUSTINE OYAMHENDA - Chairman
JOY ISAGBONA - Secretary

Signed: **CHAIRMAN**

Ex-Delta gov Uduaghan for burial December 18

WARRI

Former Delta State Governor, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, who died on October 19, 2026, three days before his 72nd birthday, is to be buried on Friday, December 18, 2026.

This was contained in a burial programme issued by the family and signed by Chief Emmanuel Uduaghan, the Alema of Warri Kingdom, on behalf of the family.

Copies of the programme were made available to journalists on Wednesday.

The burial programme shows that activities will commence on December 14 with a State Valedictory Service and Tribute at The Dome Event Centre, Asaba.

Other events include a Service of Songs on December 17 at First Baptist Church, Warri, and the funeral service on December 18 at Umuegbe Primary School, Abigborodo, Warri North, beginning at 11 am, followed by a private interment.

A Thanksgiving Service will hold on Sunday, December 20, at First Baptist Church, Warri.

INSIDE EDO

UNIBEN targets N100bn transformation, sets to graduate 11,357 at convocation

...Jega, Eyesan to headline academic ceremonies as university pursues infrastructure renewal, financial sustainability

AGHEDO IYOBOR

BENIN CITY

The University of Benin (UNIBEN) is set to embark on an ambitious transformation drive anchored on a N100 billion development fund, infrastructure renewal, academic expansion and improved financial sustainability, as it prepares to graduate 11,357 students at its 52nd Convocation Ceremony.

The development initiative, unveiled by the university's management, represents a major effort to reposition the institution, address longstanding infrastructural deficits and strengthen its capacity to compete with leading universities globally.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Edoba B. Omoregie, SAN, announced the plans on Tuesday during a pre-convocation press briefing at the Senate Chamber, Ugbowo Campus, Benin City.

The convocation and 56th Founders' Day celebrations are scheduled for November 23 to 28, 2026.

The N100 billion Trust Development Fund is expected to provide sustainable financing for critical infrastructure, including modern student hostels, a five-star hotel with conference facilities, a state-of-the-art sports centre, recreational facilities, an abattoir with research laboratories for agricultural students, a modern library and an improved transportation system.

Omoregie said the initiative was informed by the need to address the university's infrastructural challenges and establish a funding model capable of reducing dependence on government allocations.

He recalled that upon assuming office, he observed the deteriorating condition of some student hostels and inherited a huge electricity debt, adding that his administration was determined to reverse the situation.

"When I took over as Vice-Chancellor over a year ago, I went round the university and noticed the dilapidated hostels students lived in. We also inherited a huge electricity debt.

However, we have a vision for this university and we want it to be self-sustaining, going forward," he said.

He described the N100 billion initiative as a first-of-its-kind fundraising effort designed to mobilise resources for the institution's long-term development. The Board of Trustees of the fund is chaired by Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu.

Beyond the development fund, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted ongoing reforms and infrastructure projects across the Ugbowo and Ekehuan campuses, including hostel construction and renovation, rehabilitation of internal roads, improvement of lecture facilities and refurbishment of staff offices.



Prof. Edoba Bright Omoregie

He disclosed that two medical hostels and twin hostels had been constructed and furnished at Ugbowo, while renovation work was progressing at Erastus Akingbola Hostel.

Other projects include the reconstruction of car parks, rehabilitation of Iyayi Road, renovation of the Akin Deko Auditorium and construction and furnishing of a new Senate Building. The university has also recorded progress in academic development, with the number of faculties increasing from 17 to 22 under the current administration.

Omoregie further disclosed that all 34 academic programmes presented by the university for accreditation received full accreditation, while the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine programme, which had faced serious challenges, had been restored and secured interim accreditation from the National Universities Commission.

In another significant development, UNIBEN has established a research collaboration with the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, which donated high-performance computing systems to the institution in July.

The equipment, domiciled at the Petroleum Energy Systems Research Centre, is expected to strengthen molecular simulation, advanced computing and data-intensive research.

The university is also pursuing administrative reforms through the redesign of its website, introduction of an alumni portal to encourage donations and deployment of electronic payment systems.

On electricity management, the Vice-Chancellor said the institution had reduced its monthly electricity expenditure from approximately N250 million to between N120 million and N130 million.

He added that internal power vending was generating more than N20 million monthly, as part of efforts to improve revenue generation and operational efficiency.

Ekpeson charges security agencies to secure Etsako East for Yuletide

LAMAI CASSIUS

AGENEBODE

In a bold move to guarantee a peaceful and crime-free Christmas celebration, the Executive Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Rt. Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, has charged security agencies in the area to rise to the occasion and ensure total safety of lives and property during the Yuletide season.

The Chairman gave the charge during a high-powered security meeting with heads of security agencies at the council secretariat. Those in attendance included the Department of State Services (DSS), the Nigerian Army, the Edo State Security Corps (ESSC), the Nigeria Police Force, and leaders of local vigilante groups.

Speaking at the meeting, Rt. Hon. Ekpeson, who is also the Chairman of ALGON, Edo State, said the Yuletide season usually comes with increased movement of people, economic activities and social gatherings, hence the need for a proactive and coordinated security strategy to prevent criminal activities.

He stressed that his administration would not tolerate any form of criminality, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism or any act capable of disturbing the peace of Etsako East during and after the festive period.

"Etsako East must be safe for our people at home and those coming home from far and near to celebrate Christmas with their loved ones. I have called this meeting to ensure that we are fully prepared. I charge you all to be vigilant, to collaborate, and to act swiftly on intelligence," the Chairman stated.

He directed the security agencies to intensify joint patrols across all communities, mount strategic checkpoints at flashpoints and entry routes, and strengthen intelligence gathering and sharing among all security outfits.

Hon. Ekpeson also ordered vigilante operatives to embark on daily surveillance and thorough combing of bushes, forests and identified flashpoints across Etsako East, to prevent criminal elements from using remote locations as hideouts.

He further charged the vigilante groups to work closely with the formal security agencies, adhere to the rules of engagement and avoid harassment of innocent citizens, while remaining firm against criminals.



Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike

Ekpeson urges fishermen to live in peace, pomises 20 boats, N10m support

LAMAI CASSIUS

AGENEBODE

The Executive Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Rt. Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, has admonished members of the Etsako East Association of Fishermen in Agenebode to continue to live together in peace and harmony.



Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson

The Chairman stated this when the association paid him a courtesy visit. He said it does not matter where a person lives to earn his livelihood, so long as he lives peacefully with his kinsmen and maintains peace and unity with members of the community where he resides.

According to him, "we should all see ourselves as one and as one family, irrespective of our occupation, tribe, language, religion or background."

Rt. Hon. Ekpeson further assured the fishermen that under his administration, the Council will support them next year with 20 fishing boats fitted with new engines, to enable them provide abundant fish to the Local Government Area and beyond. He also promised a total sum of N10 million to assist the association.

Omoike tasks appointees on mobilisation for APC victory

LAMAI CASSIUS

AUCHI

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike, has charged political appointees and other office holders in the local government to intensify grassroots mobilisation ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Hon. Omoike gave the charge during an enlarged meeting with Special Advisers, Senior Special Assistants, Special Assistants and other political office holders in Etsako West Local Government Area.

The Council Chairman urged the appointees to demonstrate visible commitment to the APC campaign activities, stressing that their political responsibilities should go beyond occupying public offices to actively engaging the electorate and mobilising support for the party's victory.

He noted that the APC-led administration had provided stability in governance and development across the area, adding that the party's policies had contributed to improved workers' welfare and progressive transformation of the political landscape.

He called for increased political support and mobilisation for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Senator Adams Aliu Oshiomhole, Hon. Danco Anamero, Hon. Mistapha Lekky and Hon. Gani Akokhia, urging party stakeholders to work collectively towards securing victory for all APC candidates in the forthcoming elections.

He further advised the political appointees to remain abreast of current political developments, government policies and emerging national issues, to equip them with the necessary knowledge and convincing arguments to address voters' concerns and win the confidence of the electorate.

FOREIGN

NEWS



MARY PELTOLA DEFEATED THE STATE'S REPUBLICAN INCUMBENT AFTER A CONTROVERSIAL RACE

Nvidia says it won't reinstate Huang as it reports soaring sales

Nvidia has firmly ruled out letting ousted co-founder Jensen Huang return as it revealed that sales doubled to more than $100bn.

In the company's first results since Huang's dramatic exit last week, interim chief executive Colette Kress said it is "business as usual" and told investors: "We've got this."

Earlier on Tuesday, Huang said he would be "honoured" to return and lead Nvidia, having quit following alleged extra-marital affairs, including one with a suspected spy for China.

But Nvidia's chair Harvey Jones, said "The board does not intend to reinstate him."

Nvidia reported that sales for the three months to 25 October rose to $115.8bn (£86.9bn), with shares in the company jumping by 4.8% in after-hours trading.

The company's profits also doubled from a year ago rising to $65bn. Sales from data centres, a significant part of Nvidia's business, also doubled to $107bn.

The company said its rapid growth is poised to continue and revenue will rise by another 13% in the next quarter.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the company after Huang's exit, financial analysts had been unsure that Nvidia would provide any forward-looking guidance.

Daniela Hathorn, a senior analyst for trading platform Capital.com, said Nvidia's results "offer a strong answer to concerns that demand for AI infrastructure is cooling" and temper immediate worries that Huang was irreplaceable as a leader.

"The harder question is whether Nvidia can preserve the strategic advantage Huang helped build," Hathorn added. "His exit is unlikely to change orders already committed, but could matter more when Nvidia makes its next round of decisions on products, partnerships and investment."

Kress seemed eager to stress that Nvidia can continue to not only succeed, but lead the ongoing AI buildout that is happening throughout the technology industry.

"It is business as usual," she said. "Our partners, our suppliers, all of them are 100% behind us."

She added that Nvidia's leadership team has "stood up very strongly over the last week... working seamlessly in all of their departments and projects".

"Our momentum is real. Our demand is accelerating. Our supply is growing. Our customers and our partners are with us, and employees are committed." Kress said before leaving the analyst call. "We've got this."

The interim chief executive also said Nvidia is no longer shipping Hopper data centre semiconductors to China.

The Hopper technology is in Nvidia's advanced H200 processors, which the firm won approval to sell in China after Huang's repeated lobbying efforts in Washington.

They had previously been restricted over concerns that selling them to China would give its industries and military an edge over the US.

Kress did not elaborate on why the shipments had been stopped.

Jones saying earlier that the company would not answer analysts' questions about Huang or Nvidia's investigation into his conduct, he did address the search for a permanent replacement.

He said Nvidia is working with an executive search firm and is considering internal and external candidates, but that the company would not rush its selection.

"With the advanced technology and the national security dynamics in the marketplace, our new chief executive will have to navigate those waters carefully," Jones said. "The search will be thorough and we want to do it as quickly as possible, but we won't do it before we find the exact right person."

Michael Monaghan from investment firm Founder ETFs is among those who want Huang back in the top job at Nvidia.

Palestinian woman, 72, shot dead by Israeli settlers in West Bank, health ministry says

A Palestinian woman in her 70s has been shot dead, and several other people wounded, in a village in the occupied West Bank where Israeli settlers recently moved in, the Palestinian health ministry says.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened. Local Palestinians said there was an attack by settlers in part of al-Duyuk al-Tahta, near Jericho, which is meant to be under the full control of the Palestinian Authority.

According to the Israeli army, there was a Palestinian car-ramming attack on an Israeli vehicle. It said rocks were then thrown at the Israelis, who opened fire in response. It did not mention the fatal shooting of a woman.

There have been high tensions in the area since a group of settlers recently set up a new outpost.

They moved into eight houses in the village on 4 November after buying them, they have said, in a secretive operation. The properties are in an area where Israel retains full security control.

All settlements are illegal under international law.

Local Palestinians said that the events in al-Duyuk al-Tahta on Monday night began with harassment by Israeli settlers. Palestinian children threw stones, they said, and the settlers opened fire, killing Fadda al-Fahidat, who was 72, outside her home.

Fadda's daughter-in-law, Nema al-Fahidat, told the BBC that she died from a single bullet wound to the head. "It destroyed her brain," she said.

According to the Palestinian accounts, Fadda's son, Arafat, rushed to the scene in his car after hearing the news and collided with an empty Israeli settler car parked outside his family home, injuring settlers who were standing nearby. The settlers then fired more shots, they said, injuring several Palestinians, including Arafat.

"My husband, when he saw his mother, was not paying attention. He crashed into the vehicle. The vehicle was empty," Nema said.

"My husband got out of his car and tried to reach his mother and the injured young men. Then he was shot."

She added: "We tried to gather the injured people and move them away from the settler. We brought them here. But he kept firing, firing, firing. Even after we had brought the wounded young men here and moved them away from him, he continued shooting."

Nema said young Palestinians threw stones at the settlers after seeing what happened, but asked: "What can stones do against bullets?"

Medics say Palestinians and Israelis were wounded in the incident on Monday

Democrats win Alaska Senate race two weeks after midterms counting began

Democrat Mary Peltola has won Alaska's hard-fought Senate race, completing a sweeping victory for the party in the US upper house in the midterm elections.

The win gives the Democrats a 56th Senate seat following a tumultuous and controversial election in Alaska, which featured alleged spoiler recruitment efforts and unprecedented court battles.

It took two full weeks of counting to call a winner in the 3 November poll due to the logistical challenge of collecting ballots from across the state's remote expanse.

The Democratic win is the ninth Senate seat the party took from Republicans in this year's midterms, giving the party control of the US Congress for the last two years of Donald Trump's presidency.

A historic set of victories nationally also saw the party win back the House of Representatives.

In her victory statement, Peltola said the "status quo in DC is not working for Alaska".

She recalled speaking to "elders in tears about empty fish racks" and to parents in rural Alaska choosing between heating their homes and putting food on the table.

Peltola's campaign had come under fire after the New York Times reported Democrats attempted to recruit a candidate named Daniel J Sullivan, a complete political unknown residing in a small coastal town who shared a name with the state's current US Senator and incumbent, Dan S Sullivan, in an alleged attempt to confuse voters.

Could Alaska's fishing industry tilt Washington's balance of power?

After legal challenges, state courts ruled the second Daniel J Sullivan could remain on the ballot, and election officials distinguished them on election materials.

Peltola denied having knowledge of the alleged plot but her campaign swiftly came under fire, and both the justice department and Alaska's Republican governor said they would launch investigations.

The Trump administration then filed a lawsuit attempting to stop the certification of the election results if the incumbent Republican Senator Sullivan lost.

A federal judge, though, dismissed the case, following legal challenges from Alaska election officials as well as the Peltola campaign and voting groups.

Due to Alaska's ranked-choice voting system, voters confused about which Dan Sullivan was the incumbent could simply choose each man as their first and second choice.

If they did so, after the first round of voting was complete, tabulation would re-allocate any votes from the non-incumbent Dan Sullivan - who stood little to no chance of winning - to the US Senator.

Experts told the BBC that this process made it difficult for any potential spoiler candidate to have any impact on the results.

An analysis by BBC Verify found that even if every vote for the other Dan Sullivan had gone to the incumbent, Peltola would still have won.

Putin's Crimean Bridge partly collapses as Zelensky hails 'unprecedented' attack by Ukraine

Ukraine has severely damaged a critical bridge linking Russia to occupied Crimea, in what President Volodymyr Zelensky says was an "unprecedented operation" weeks in the making.

Images shared by Ukrainian officials show a section of the Crimean Bridge collapsed into the water, dealing a logistical and symbolic blow to Moscow's war effort.

The Kremlin said it would rebuild the bridge "better than before".

Meanwhile in Kyiv, Mayor Vitaliy Klitschko said traffic had partially resumed on the Pivnichnyi (Northern) and Pivdennyi (Southern) bridges - key crossings over the Dnipro River - after they had been closed following Russian strikes overnight.

Ukraine has long targeted the Crimean Bridge, which provides a road and rail route for Russian soldiers heading towards the front line, but has struggled to close it for good.

While Kyiv has been trying to increase the cost to Russia of waging war economically, by hitting oil refineries and depots, striking the bridge is an attempt to increase the political cost on Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The timing of the strike comes at a significant moment, ahead of Putin meeting the leaders of China and the US. This could cloud his moment back in the spotlight.

The Crimean Bridge was built by Russia after it invaded and illegally annexed Ukraine's southern peninsula in 2014.

The $3.6bn (£2.7bn) piece of infrastructure is widely seen in Russia and Ukraine as Putin's personal pet project: His close tycoon friend Arkady Rotenberg built it, and then Putin personally opened it by driving a lorry over it in May 2018.

In Ukraine, the much-hated bridge is seen as one of the main symbols of Russia's continuing occupation of Ukrainian lands.

"We're drinking champagne!" Andrii, an engineer who lives in Kyiv, told the BBC.

FOREIGN

NEWS

US urges respect of ceasefire in Western Sahara as UN peacekeepers leave

The US ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, on Tuesday called for calm and full respect of the ceasefire in the Western Sahara.

Speaking in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, his comment come as the United Nations peacekeepers begin leaving the disputed territory.

The mineral-rich Western Sahara is largely controlled by Morocco but for decades the Algeria-backed Polisario Front has pushed for independence.

Washington backs Rabat's claim.

"All parties must refrain from provocations and escalation, and we must remain committed to the ceasefire. And I know that will be the case here from the government, Morocco," said Waltz.

The UN peacekeeping mission in the territory, MINURSO, saw its mandate expire last month after the UN Security Council failed to adopt a resolution renewing it.

Morocco has reiterated its commitment to a ceasefire, despite the Polisario declaring in 2020 that it would resume its armed struggle.

"We call on the Polisario to rejoin that ceasefire, to honour it in full, and to demonstrate a commitment to peace," Waltz said.

Washington will also "continue working with all parties and with the United Nations, as appropriate, towards a lasting settlement", the envoy said.

Several European nations, including the former colonial power Spain, have in recent years backed Rabat's autonomy plan as a way to break decades of diplomatic deadlock over Western Sahara.

MINURSO, was created in 1991 to organise a self-determination referendum which has never taken place.

The mission's chief, Russian diplomat Alexander Ivanko, said on Monday that the peacekeepers had officially begun withdrawing from the territory, but that the process might take months.

"We are trying to make January 31 the final deadline for our presence here," he told a Moroccan outlet.

Washington had proposed extending the peacekeeping mission while effectively dropping the requirement for a referendum and making Morocco's autonomy plan the basis for any future talks.

Eleven of 15 council members supported that approach, but Russia rejected it as one-sided. Instead, Moscow sought to renew MINURSO unchanged, only for Washington to block the move.



PRESIDENTIAL JET:
The French-made Falcon 6X replaces the ageing presidential jet, officials say.

Ghana's new $60m presidential jet sparks public outrage

Ghana's government has defended its purchase of a new presidential jet amid criticism over its cost, as many citizens continue to struggle with the high cost of living.

The $60m (£46m) French-made Falcon 6X has sparked a political row, with opposition politicians accusing President John Mahama's administration of misplaced priorities.

But the government says the purchase is justified, arguing that Ghana's improving economy makes the aircraft affordable and is needed to replace an ageing presidential jet.

The controversy comes as Mahama's administration seeks to demonstrate an economic recovery after years of financial difficulties that forced Ghana to seek IMF assistance.

Can Ghana's new president meet the voters' high expectations?

Manufactured by French aerospace company Dassault Aviation, the aircraft was delivered to the Ghana Air Force on Monday at a reported cost of $61m.

Parliament approved its purchase last December as part of a broader programme to modernise Ghana's military aviation fleet, which also includes four helicopters from Airbus.

The jet was welcomed with a water salute on Monday, but its arrival triggered criticism online and among opposition politicians over the cost and timing of the purchase.

While in the opposition, Mahama himself opposed buying a new presidential jet, prompting questions about why his administration has now gone ahead with the purchase.

Opposition MP Samuel Abu Jinapor questioned the government's priorities, saying the expenditure came at a time when many Ghanaians continue to struggle with the cost of living and youth unemployment remained alarmingly high.

"What was unacceptable in opposition cannot suddenly become acceptable in government merely because the occupants of power have changed," Jinapor added.

He accused the governing National Democratic Congress (NDC) of hypocrisy, recalling how its senior figures had strongly opposed proposals for a new presidential aircraft when they were in opposition.

Jinapor also called for greater transparency over the procurement process, how the purchase was financed and the government's justification for the expenditure.

The purchase has also prompted sharp criticism on social media, with some users arguing the money could have been spent on more pressing public needs.

"This money can employ over 100,000 nurses and 200,000 teachers," an X user posted.

But the government has rejected the criticism, saying Ghana's economic circumstances have changed considerably since the NDC opposed a similar purchase.

Peter Lanchene Toobu, chairman of parliament's defence committee, said the party had never opposed acquiring a presidential jet in principle.

Philippines police ask prosecutors to charge Thomas Markle over child sex abuse material

Police in the Philippines have asked prosecutors to charge Thomas Markle Sr, the father of Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, with possession of and intent to distribute child sexual abuse material.

Cebu province prosecutor Graeme Elmido told the BBC that police had filed documents requesting that Markle be charged on Monday.

Earlier this month, Markle, 82, was separately arrested and charged in the US with possession of child sexual abuse material. The FBI said agents seized about 78 items, including film negatives, slides and books that they allege contained child sex abuse material, from storage units Markle rented.

Markle, who is in custody in the US, has previously denied the allegations.

Elmido told the BBC that Philippine National Police had asked prosecutors to charge Markle with "two counts of intent to distribute CSAEM [child sexual abuse and exploitation material], and one count of possession of CSAEM material".

Last month, police in the Philippines obtained a warrant to examine devices allegedly removed from Markle's former home in the country.

Four boxes of material, including computers, phones, hard drives and old video tapes, were handed to officers by Meghan's half brother Thomas Markle Jr.

Earlier this month, Markle Sr was arrested and charged in the US. He had initially been placed under house detention at his assisted living facility in Florida, but was taken back into custody last week after prosecutors alleged he removed his ankle monitor.

Meghan Markle has been estranged from her father since 2018. The BBC understands she broke contact with him last year, telling him she and the authorities knew he had abused young girls.

In a previously shared statement after the allegations against her father emerged, Meghan wrote: "I am deeply distressed... my thoughts are with any children who may have been harmed."

Can a US-backed mineral highway bring peace and prosperity to DR Congo?

The Lobito Corridor links DR Congo's mineral-rich south to Angola's Atlantic coast through the Benguela Railway and the Port of Lobito

As trains carrying thousands of tonnes of copper from the Democratic Republic of Congo roar through her community, 20-year-old Manuela Julia is not thinking about critical minerals or billion-dollar investments.

She is thinking about getting around more easily.

The railway runs through Catumbela, near the Angolan city of Lobito, on the Atlantic coast.

For Julia, it has made travelling cheaper and more convenient.

"Before, I had to use a taxi, which is much more expensive. Now it is cheaper and easier to travel," she says.

But the railway has ambitions far bigger than improving local transport.

It is part of the Lobito Corridor, a US-backed effort to secure access to Africa's critical minerals and promote regional economic cooperation, which Washington hopes will help bring peace to conflict-torn eastern DR Congo.

Under agreements brokered by US President Donald Trump, DR Congo and neighbouring Rwanda have committed to greater economic cooperation, including more transparent mineral supply chains and regional infrastructure development.

The wider plan envisages linking these initiatives to the railway, which transports minerals from Central Africa to Western markets via Angola, rather than east to China as most do currently.

The hope is that formalising the mineral trade and encouraging investment could help curb illicit markets that have helped finance armed groups and fuel instability.

Manuela Julia says the railway has made travelling around easier.

But can a railway built to move minerals to global markets also deliver peace and prosperity?

The Lobito Corridor links DR Congo's mineral-rich south to Angola's Atlantic coast through the Benguela Railway and the Port of Lobito.

Its importance has grown as demand for copper and cobalt rises, driven partly by the global transition to cleaner energy, as both are critical ingredients for all kinds of electrical components.

"The timing matters," says Johannesburg-based political risk analyst Wellington Muzengeza

"Electrification and the energy transition have increased the strategic importance of copper, cobalt and reliable mineral supply chains."

DR Congo is the world's largest producer of cobalt and one of its biggest copper producers, along with neighbouring Zambia. The US sees the corridor as a means to diversify mineral supplies and reduce reliance on China, which dominates much of the world's processing capacity.

Xi and Putin meet at APEC summit ahead of trilateral talks with Trump

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin met on Wednesday in Shenzhen, China, on the sidelines of the APEC summit.

Putin arrived in Shenzhen in the early hours of Wednesday morning and delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the APEC CEO summit:

"The old tools of economic domination and de facto coercion have become obsolete and have largely lost their intimidating effect. Yes, sanctions, tariffs, and export restrictions still have a deterrent effect, but they are no longer capable of completely halting growth, much less crushing the economies of competitors."

During the meeting, Xi congratulated the achievements of China and Russia in their bilateral ties and called for further efforts to deepen "all-round cooperation" between the two:

"Looking ahead, we should maintain our pioneering and enterprising spirit, continue to explore the enormous potential and rich substance of a new era in China-Russia relations, remain committed to practical action, take more concrete measures to deepen all-round cooperation between our two countries, firmly shoulder the responsibilities and obligations as major countries, and lead and advance the trend toward a multi-polar world and greater democracy in international relations."

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10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
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Coach Imama steps down as Abia Warriors Gaffer



IMAMA AMAPAKABO

Abia Warriors Football Club of Umuahia Technical Adviser, Imama Amapakabo, has resigned from his appointment.

The Rivers State-born tactician, who is on his second stint with Umu Chineke, threw in the towel following a series of poor results that left the team languishing in the relegation zone of the Nigeria Premier Football League table.

Imama announced his resignation to the players and the technical crew after today's training session at the Abia State House of Assembly football pitch.

It will be recalled that Amapakabo, who won the league with Rangers International of Enugu, guided Abia Warriors to its first-ever continental football, a historic milestone that the fans, supporters, and the entire Abia State will never forget.

The board, management, players, and staff of Abia Warriors Football Club express their sincere gratitude to Coach Imama Amapakabo for his dedication, hard work, and immense contributions to the growth and success of the club during his time in charge. His professionalism and commitment to the team will always be remembered and appreciated.

The club wishes him the very best in his future endeavours and in the next phase of his coaching career.

Meanwhile, the management has commenced the process of appointing a new Technical Adviser who will lead the team forward.

In the interim, the Chief Coach of the Club, Bethel Oji, will take charge of the team's preparations for upcoming fixtures.

Details of his successor will be announced in due course.

Sam Sodje spares Eric Chelle, blasts Super Eagles players as Tanzania stalemate threatens AFCON dream

Former Super Eagles defender Sam Sodje has declared that Nigeria's 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualification campaign has reached a worrying stage following Tuesday's goalless draw against Tanzania in Zanzibar, insisting that the players, rather than head coach Eric Sekou Chelle, must accept responsibility for the team's disappointing performances.

Nigeria failed to build on their 3-1 victory over the Taifa Stars in Uyo, settling for a frustrating 0-0 draw that left the Super Eagles with seven points from four Group L matches, three behind leaders Guinea-Bissau.

Reacting to the setback, Sodje criticised the players' attitude, questioning their determination and inability to execute basic football responsibilities.

"As an ex-player, I don't like blaming the players, but I think it's nothing to do with the manager," Sodje declared.

"I think the players were not gritty enough. They didn't want it enough."

The former defender insisted that the time had come for Nigerian internationals to accept greater accountability instead of allowing the technical crew to absorb criticism.

"I think we need to blame the players sometimes now. They cannot be playing like that for the national team," he stated.

Sodje was particularly disappointed with Nigeria's inability to maintain possession and execute simple passes.

"They couldn't give ten-yard passes, so it was really bad. It was really bad," he lamented

The former international admitted that the result had heightened concerns about Nigeria's qualification prospects.

"It's panic time, you know," he warned.



SAM SODJE

FIFA Rankings: Super Eagles Climb to 29th Globally, Fifth in Africa



SUPER EAGLES

Nigeria's Super Eagles have moved up one place to 29th position in the latest FIFA men's world rankings released on Wednesday.

The three-time African champions improved from their previous position of 30th in the world, while also climbing to fifth place among African nations.

Algeria dropped out of the continent's top five, allowing Nigeria to move up the rankings.

Morocco remain Africa's highest-ranked team, followed by Senegal, Egypt and Côte d'Ivoire.

The Super Eagles featured in two matches during the November international window as part of their preparations for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations.

Eric Chelle's men began the campaign with an impressive 3-1 victory over Tanzania's Taifa Stars at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo.

However, Nigeria were unable to complete a double over the East Africans, settling for a goalless draw in Tuesday's return encounter at the Amaan Stadium in Zanzibar.

AFCON 2027 Qualifier: Claude Le Roy Quits As Congo Head Coach

French tactician Claude Le Roy has resigned as head coach of Congo following the team's disappointing 1-0 home defeat to Comoros in the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers.

The 78-year-old manager decided to step down after a disappointing run of results that has left the Red Devils struggling to secure qualification for the continental tournament.

Congo suffered the damaging defeat at the Stade Alphonse-Massamba-Debat in Brazzaville on Tuesday, November 17, with Ben-Chayeel Hamada scoring the decisive goal in the 32nd minute.

The result dealt another blow to Congo's qualification hopes, with Comoros claiming a crucial away victory in the encounter.

Le Roy's departure brings an end to his latest spell in charge of the Central African nation as the team faces an uphill battle in its quest to qualify for AFCON 2027.



CLAUDE LE ROY

AFCON 2027: CAF relocates coordination headquarters from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam



The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has relocated the AFCON 2027 Coordination Headquarters from Nairobi, Kenya, to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as preparations for the continental tournament gather momentum

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has relocated the AFCON 2027 Coordination Headquarters from Nairobi, Kenya, to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as preparations for the continental tournament gather momentum.

The decision will see the office responsible for coordinating preparations for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations move from Kenya to Tanzania.

CAF's decision is aimed at improving coordination and facilitating closer working relationships with the Tanzania Football Federation, the Tanzanian government and the Local Organising Committee (LOC).

The coordination office plays a key role in overseeing tournament preparations, ensuring effective collaboration among the various stakeholders and monitoring the delivery of essential arrangements ahead of the competition.

The 2027 AFCON will be jointly hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, marking the first time the three East African countries will stage the continent's biggest football tournament together.

The relocation is expected to strengthen coordination between CAF and the Tanzanian organising authorities as preparations continue for the 2027 AFCON.



Sports

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Coach Nsien

Nsien sets top targets at record-breaking MLS club

Coach Michael Nsien, who was part of history-making MLS side Nashville FC, has disclosed that he is thrilled with the club's achievements just as he targets more glory with them.

Nashville set a new MLS record of recording the most points in a single season – 77 points – this past regular season.

The assistant coach of Nashville FC, whose role included organising the defence, told SCORENigeria:"One of my roles is to organise the defense. We also broke the record by only conceding 25 goals this year in 34 games."

He also spoke about the team's long-term goals.

"It's great to think that our contributions to the team will be forever etched in history. That's a testament to the ideas of the coaching staff and execution of the players," he said.

"We have a clear idea and we are relentless about seeing it through. The first two years was about changing the culture and mindset of the club. We want the club to be ambitious and for the players to always feel as if the onus is on us to dictate games.

"The next target will be consistency, to continue to do what we have started.

"Also, North American dominance. We have to compete for trophies such as CONCACAF Champions League and League Cup, those will be our targets."

2026 National Sports Festival postponed to May 2027

The 2026 National Sports Festival, tagged the Coal City Games and scheduled to be hosted by Enugu State, has been postponed to May 2027.

The rescheduling means the highly anticipated national multi-sports competition, which was expected to bring together athletes from the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, will now hold next year.

Enugu State was designated as the host of the festival, which is expected to feature Nigeria's finest athletes competing for honours across various sporting events.

The Coal City Games will provide a major platform for athletes to showcase their talents, while allowing participating states to assess their sports development programmes and identify emerging talents.

The postponement also provides the Enugu State Government and relevant sports authorities with additional time to address organisational and logistical requirements ahead of the competition.

Further details, including the exact dates, competition schedule and other arrangements for the May 2027 festival, are expected to be announced by the National Sports Commission.



FIFA PRESIDENT GIANNI INFANTINO

FIFA President Infantino to arrive Warri, sets to commission Warri Township Stadium

Warri is set for a major moment in its sporting history as FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, is expected to lead a high-powered delegation of global football personalities to Delta State on Saturday, November 21, 2026, for the commissioning of the reconstructed Warri City Stadium.

Infantino will be accompanied by CAF President, Dr Patrice Motsepe, alongside other prominent figures in international football, in what promises to be a landmark event for sports development in Delta State and Nigeria.

The Executive Governor of Delta State, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori, will serve as the chief host at the historic ceremony, which is expected to attract football administrators, government officials, former internationals, sports stakeholders and football enthusiasts from across the country and beyond.

The reconstructed 20,000-capacity facility is expected to significantly strengthen Nigeria's sports infrastructure and restore Warri's position as a major destination for elite football and other sporting competitions.

Manchester City eyes Victor Osimhen as possible replacement for Haaland

Manchester City have identified Victor Osimhen as a direct replacement for Erling Haaland in the event the Norwegian striker is sold to Real Madrid.

The unfolding story is that Manchester City anticipate receiving a minimum of €175 million from Real Madrid for Erling Haaland and intend to reinvest the money in a new forward.

El Nacional reported that Osimhen, the 27-year-old Nigerian centre-forward from Galatasaray, is on a shortlist of potential replacements.

This list also includes Igor Thiago of Brentford and Evanilson from Bournemouth.

Osimhen became a player for the Turkish club in July 2025 and has a contract that lasts until June 2029.

He has scored nine goals and made three assists in eight Süper Lig appearances this season and has 35 goals in 52 caps for Nigeria.

His current market value, according to Transfermarkt, is €65.00M.

Juventus and Manchester United have also been mentioned in connection with the striker.



VICTOR OSIMHEN

Balogun fires 13th USA goal in big win

Folarin Balogun scored his 13th goal for USA as they spanked Haiti 6-0 in a first leg quarterfinal of the CONCACAF Nations League.

Second-half sub Balogun got a pass, let the ball roll to him and with a first-time touch delivered a firm. low shot through the legs of the Haiti goalkeeper in the 82nd minute.

It was the last goal of the game to complete the rout.

The US are aiming a fourth CONCACAF Nations League crown after they won the competition in three of the first four editions.



BALOGUN SCORES IN USA BIG WIN